

NEWS RELEASE
Office of Communications

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FULTON COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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Fulton County Ranks in Top Quarter of Health Study

County Health Rankings report released for all 50 states

Fulton County ranks in the top quarter of Georgia counties on overall health outcomes and health factors according to a *County Health Rankings* report released by the University of Wisconsin and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Project. Fulton's rankings were achieved based on the relatively positive data on health behaviors and the availability of quality health care services provided in the county.

"This report is definitely a useful tool for us as we move forward with addressing health disparities in Fulton," states Patrice A. Harris, MD, Director of Fulton County Health Services. "It helps us identify areas of strengths and as well as areas that can be improved."

The *County Health Rankings* reports the overall health of every county in the United States. The report findings provide public health and community leaders, policy-makers, consumers and advocates with an overview of how healthy a county is in comparison to others within the state. In Georgia, 157 counties were included in the study. Two counties, Echols and Taliaferro, were excluded because they were too small to provide reliable results.

Health Rankings were categorized in two areas, health outcomes and health factors. Health outcomes represent how healthy a county is while health factors measures what influences the health of the county. Each county was ranked on factors such as smoking, obesity, education, crime, air pollution levels and unemployment rates. In comparison to other metro counties, DeKalb, Cobb and Gwinnett, Fulton ranked No. 4. Cobb was number 2, Gwinnett was 7th and DeKalb was 16th.

The overall Rankings for Behaviors (4) and Clinical Care (9) is an indication that the County's strategy to address health disparities is on target. Fulton has been converting its health service delivery operations to provide integrated services in its health centers. These health centers have become 'one-stop-shops' where residents have improved access to health care as well as human services programs.

One location, the Neighborhood Union Health Center, provides centralized access to medical care, behavioral health and substance abuse services, job counseling and training and access to adult education programs. It is an example of public and private entities working together to improve the length of life and quality of life for Fulton County residents.

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The four Metro counties, Fulton, DeKalb, Cobb and Gwinnett, ranked among the worst in the area that measured environmental quality, which includes air quality and traffic congestion. “Unfortunately, these results reflect challenges faced by many urban areas,” states Dr. Harris.

The County Health Rankings report can be used as a tool for policy development, programmatic planning and to educate about the significant impact disparities have on the health status of the entire state. Dr. Harris adds, “Achieving health equity throughout all communities is one strategic way to improve the county’s overall health status.”

For more information about Fulton County’s strategy to address health disparities, visit www.fultoncountygahhealth.org and click on the *Common Ground – Creating Equity through Public Policy and Community Engagement* document in the Publications section.

For more information about the *County Health Rankings* report, visit www.countyhealthrankings.org.

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